



www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman (703) 324-2321 chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov

Bulova Byline
Chairman's Monthly Report
State of the County - January 2010

I write to you as the challenging year of 2009 comes to an end. Fairfax County continues to feel the repercussions of a severe breakdown in our national economy but as Albert Einstein once said, **“In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.”** As we weather this economic storm, we will focus on the opportunity for engagement, change and growth that lies ahead.

Our major source of revenue – making up over 60% of our budget – is from residential and commercial real estate taxes. In the current fiscal year, the value of property in Fairfax County declined by 10%. That's a loss of \$244 million.

Had the Board attempted to maintain services, programs and staffing levels at the previous year's level and provided performance-based salary for our employees, we would have come up **\$640 million – or nearly 20 percent -- short** in our \$3.3 billion General Fund Budget.

As we prepared for this past year's budget, I initiated a series of **Community Dialogues** with residents throughout the County. We presented information regarding our budget and discussed with you ideas for addressing our fiscal challenges. Together, we examined our priorities and discussed possible service reductions or organizational changes.



Thanks in large part to this inclusive process, and aided by Stimulus funding that provided a bridge for our public schools, our Board was able to unanimously adopt a budget last April that struck a responsible balance. We were able to keep average tax bills steady. We also made a number of cuts and reductions and we also found new ways to deliver services in a less costly manner.

As we look ahead and prepare for next year's budget we continue to be seriously challenged. Property taxes continue to fall (this time by \$232.5 million). Costs for debt service, utilities and

retirement are increasing. These two factors combined create a projected shortfall for Fiscal Year 2011 of \$316 million dollars. Schools – **which make up 53.8% of the County's Budget** -- project a shortfall of \$176 million.

Once again, beginning in September, we have worked together through the Community Dialogue process to prepare for next year. You can find more information about the Dialogues, and see suggestions and comments by going to our web site www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget.

At the same time that our County has experienced the most severe financial decline in most of our lifetimes, we are challenged by an increase in the needs of many in our community.



County residents are still losing their homes to foreclosure. In September of 2008, **foreclosures** in Fairfax County peaked at more than 2,200. Last July was the first time in 16 months that we had less than 1,000 foreclosed homes on the market. A hopeful sign, home sales are up 5%. As the inventory of foreclosed homes diminishes, home prices are likely to stabilize and, hopefully, even increase.

For details on the help that Fairfax County offers to citizens facing the loss of their homes, read the full text of my State of the County remarks at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman/news/state-of-the-county-2009.htm> or contact Mark Thomas in my office at 703-324-2321.

Loss of a home is often directly related to loss of employment. Unemployment nationwide remains high at 9.7%. We are faring better in Fairfax County. Still, our 4.7 percent unemployment rate is up 1.5 percent from last year. Prior to this downturn, unemployment in Fairfax had never been above 4%.

If you are affected by this rise in unemployment, you can find assistance by contacting our Department of Family Services, Skill Source Centers at 703-704-6286.

This economy has caused a dramatic increase in demand for our county's human services. Our Department of Coordinated Services Planning was established in the mid 90's to handle urgent human services-related situations. The top calls are for emergency rent; emergency food and food stamps; and utility assistance.

The demand for such services is widespread. For assistance from the Coordinated Services Planning office, call 703-222-0880, TTY 711. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Or you can contact Crisis Line at 211.

While many economists believe the market is bottoming out, the path to economic recovery is steep and winding.

Despite the current economic conditions and the challenges our county faces, my colleagues and I are looking to use this downturn to identify **opportunities** – or, using the popular current phrase, **we are “not letting a crisis go to waste.”**

In June of this year, I led our Board in a two day retreat to determine our priorities, both within the county and in our districts. At our Board Meeting on December 7th, we unanimously adopted a slate of Goals and Priorities to guide us during these difficult years. By **engaging** our residents and businesses in the process of addressing these challenging times, **protecting investment** in our **most critical priorities**, and by **maintaining strong responsible fiscal stewardship**, we must ensure: a quality educational system; safe streets and neighborhoods; a clean, sustainable environment; livable, caring and affordable

communities; a vibrant economy; an efficient transportation network; recreational and cultural opportunities; and taxes that are affordable. You can read the full text of each of these goals at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman/news/state-of-the-county-2009.htm>.

Meeting these goals in these challenging times will not be easy, but I remain optimistic. By working together, we have been able to adjust to these changing economic times, while protecting the quality of life we value.

Ask county residents what bothers them the most, the answer is most often **traffic congestion**. Essentially all roads in Fairfax County are owned and maintained (or not!) by the Commonwealth of Virginia. At our retreat, my colleagues and I agreed to examine and pursue options for improving our share of transportation funding, as well as possibly seeking more authority over maintenance and operation of the State roads and intersections in Fairfax.

A number of major transportation projects are underway (or are being planned) in our County.

Rail to Dulles Airport is closer to reality than ever before. By 2013 we will have service to Wiehle Ave. in Reston. By 2016 we will have service all the way to the airport! Construction has begun on the

Capital Beltway HOT Lanes and completion is expected in 2013. As Chairman, one of my top priorities is to include Express Bus or Bus Rapid Transit on the HOT Lanes.



Congestion will lessen on I-95 with a new fourth lane in each direction on I-95 between the Fairfax County Parkway and Route 123. **The Telegraph Road Interchange** is being re-built. This final major project of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge replacement will improve traffic flow and provide pedestrian access.

The final two miles of the **Fairfax County Parkway**, which runs through the Engineering Proving Ground, is under construction. Thanks to federal stimulus dollars, we expect to complete Phase 1 and 2 of this project by the end of 2010. Thanks to \$150 million secured by Congressman Jim Moran, we will be able to **widen Route 1 in the Fort Belvoir area** from 4 to 6 lanes.

During this year, our Department of Transportation conducted public meetings to gather comments and suggestions for a comprehensive 10-year plan for enhanced **bus service countywide** that includes both the Fairfax Connector and Metrobus.



Meanwhile, a number of major redevelopment and revitalization projects are transforming our community in a positive way.

With construction of the Metro Silver Line, we are well underway on plans to redevelop **Tysons Corner** into a planned, transit-oriented, green, walkable, multi-use urban community, with 8 distinct districts oriented to 4 rail stations and laced with 160 acres of parks and open space. Information about the Transformation of Tysons can be found on the County's website at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/tysonscorner/>.

In July, the Board approved the rezoning necessary to allow **Springfield Mall** to be revitalized into a pedestrian-oriented town center of mixed retail, office, hotel and residential uses. The project calls for a grocery store, dog park, tot lot, athletic courts, fitness center, and state of the art movie center. The application we approved will enhance the image of Springfield, and transform the mall into a thriving amenity for the community once again.



Other redevelopment and revitalization projects in the County include the **Mosaic at Merrifield**, south of Lee Highway; re-planning activities in the **Reston/Herndon** area of the County, which will take advantage of the extension of the Silver Line through that area; and the re-use of the former **Lorton Prison** into the Lorton Arts Center and the Laurel Hill mixed use community – an exciting new component of our South County area of Fairfax. Plan amendments for commercial revitalization in the **Richmond Highway** corridor are also underway that will allow for revitalizing the area in concert with the Defense Department Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process.

On October 19th, our Board adopted a **Fairfax County Energy Policy**, consistent with our Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Initiative. We are also looking at ways to remove barriers to residents wanting to generate their own electricity with solar panels.



On November 18th, I hosted a **Town Meeting** that described this policy and gave specific examples of what we are doing in Fairfax County. For more information, watch the Town Meeting by going to my web site at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman/> or contact Mark Thomas in my office at 703-324-2321 or Mark.Thomas@fairfaxcounty.gov.

When I was sworn in as your Chairman 10 months ago, I acknowledged that we were in the middle of difficult times. I said that it was important that we remain hopeful **and we have**. Our Fairfax County community has rolled up our collective sleeves and worked together to navigate these choppy waters.

As we near the end of 2009, we can look back on some very positive accomplishments.

- Our School System continues to be one of the best in the Nation. Our Thomas Jefferson High School was ranked #1 in the U.S.
- We continue to be the safest jurisdiction of our size in the United States. This past year, crime statistics fell.
- We still are among the most sought after address for the nation's businesses. This year, Hilton Worldwide and SAIC chose to locate their headquarters here in Fairfax County.
- And we have become the new home of the IGNITE Institute, a new biotechnology company for personalized medicine. The addition of this new primary industry sector to Fairfax County's economy will bring significant improvements in medical treatment and will be a major catalyst in the evolution of health care. Thanks to pioneering research at the Ignite Institute, Fairfax County will be tied to major developments in this field and will become major players in the field of biotechnology.

While there are many difficult challenges that lay ahead, I am committed to turning those **difficulties** into **opportunities** - to move Fairfax County forward, and to meet the needs of our community.

I know I can speak for all of my Colleagues on the Board when I say that we will work – with you - every day to keep Fairfax County the place where we want to live, work, play, raise our families and grow older comfortably. As the generations who have passed before us we are committed to making every difficulty into an opportunity, every struggle a chance to leave our community just a little bit better than we found it.

I hope that you'll join me on **Wednesday, January 13, 2010**, between 4 and 7 p.m. in the Board Auditorium at the Government Center for my ***Chairman's Reception*** to celebrate a new year. A donation of canned foods for local charities is welcome and I look forward to celebrating with you!



Sharon Bulova
Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors



Please join

Chairman Sharon Bulova

For a Holiday Reception to Celebrate the New Year

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

4 PM to 7 PM

Government Center Forum
12000 Government Center Parkway,
Fairfax Virginia 22035

Please bring a donation of canned foods for local chairities.

The invitation card features a dark red background with a bokeh effect of light red circles. On the right side, there is a decorative white swirl with three hanging Christmas ornaments. The text is in a mix of gold and white, with some parts in italics.

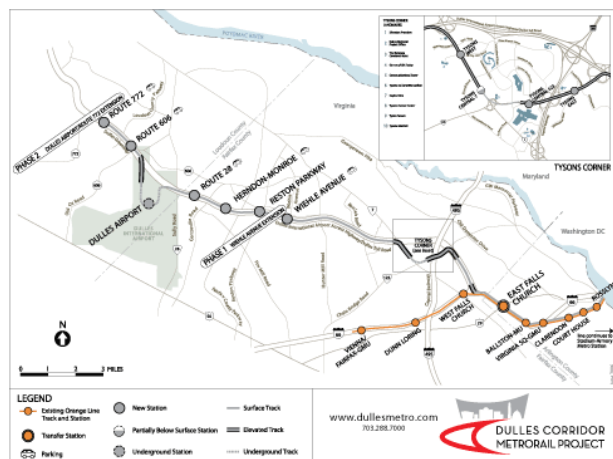
You're Invited! - Fairfax County to Receive Art Display Featuring Board of Supervisors Chairmen

- * Specially commissioned display to be presented Wednesday, Jan. 13, at 3:30 p.m.
- * Work features the current chairman and five previous chairmen.
- * Display will reside in the Conference Center of the Fairfax County Government Center.

On **Wednesday, Jan. 13, at 3:30 p.m.**, just prior to the Chairman's Holiday Reception, the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations will present to Fairfax County a specially commissioned **artist's display of black-and-white photos taken of all living Board of Supervisors chairmen** under the current urban county executive form of government. Also mounted on the wall will be photos of deceased Chairmen Babson, Hoffnagle, and Herrity.

For the complete news release, visit: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/2010/board-chairmen-art-display.htm>.

CREATION OF TAX DISTRICT FOR PHASE II METRO STATIONS



At our December 7 meeting, the Board approved the creation of a special tax district to fund the construction of stations along the new Silver Line in the Dulles Corridor: Reston Parkway, Herndon-Monroe, and Route 28. A majority of the landowners in the corridor have had the foresight to voluntarily agree to tax themselves, covering the vast majority of construction costs for these Phase II stations.

These stations are an investment in the future. They will allow us to harness the full potential of Dulles Rail and will have enormous benefit to the corridor and the County as a whole. I am

confident that we will see a return on this investment that will take many forms; new businesses in the corridor which will create jobs, an expanded tax base, the opportunity for redevelopment, and a much needed transit option for residents.

UPDATE ON PREVENTING AND ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Our brand new Housing Opportunities Support Teams (HOST) are now operating and have achieved some very impressive results already. **In the first 13 days of operation, the HOST system has already prevented 18 families from becoming homeless.** As you may be aware, this program is run by the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, which was formed earlier this year to implement the Ten Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. The HOST program, a partnership between the county and community and faith organizations, focuses on providing housing to ensure the stability people need to get back on their feet and become independent.

Homelessness is a serious challenge that affects our community and the initial success of HOST is a promising step to our efforts to find solutions. To learn more, please visit: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless or call 703-324-9492, TTY 771.

H1N1 VACCINATION PROGRAM UPDATE



The Virginia Health Commissioner recently announced that there is now enough H1N1 vaccine coming to the Commonwealth that the clinics at each of the Health Department District Offices can now

make the vaccine available to anyone who wishes to be vaccinated.

Although the media interest and demand for H1N1 vaccine has waned, the Health Department encourages anyone who has not yet received the vaccine (especially those at high risk for influenza related complications) to get vaccinated. Influenza disease activity continues to be widespread in Virginia, with more people seeking treatment for flu-like symptoms than is usual for this time of year.

Visit <http://www.vdh.state.va.us> to find the vaccination site nearest you.

2010 CENSUS JOBS

The U.S. Census Bureau is recruiting temporary, part-time census takers for the 2010 census. These short-term jobs offer good pay, flexible hours, paid training, and reimbursement for authorized work-related expenses, such as mileage incurred while conducting census work. Best of all, census takers work right in their own communities.

Census taker jobs are excellent for people who want to work part-time, those who are between jobs, or just about anyone who wants to earn extra money while performing an important service for their community.

Apply Now! 1-866-861-2010. The local census office number is 703-865-3060.

YOUR CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Host Homeless Youths: Fairfax County has a new program to help homeless young people. The Host Homes Program provides support to youth who are unaccompanied, which means they are not living with a parent or guardian.

Who is an unaccompanied youth? A schoolaged person who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian and who lives in inadequate or temporary settings such as:

- Doubled up with relatives who are not their legal guardian;
- Living in motels, hotels, parks or campgrounds or sleeping in cars, public places, bus or train stations, or abandoned buildings.
- Staying with a friend or a friend's family; or
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.

Students are homeless for a variety of reasons. We are looking for persons or families who would like to help by providing a place to stay so that a homeless high school student can continue attending school. The goal of the program is to provide safe, stable, supervised homes for homeless high school students ages 16 to 21. This new program will enable these students to continue attending high school through graduation

For more information please contact Patty Holley at patriciakholley@gmail.com or call 703-403-8565